



Happy July 4th
July 2016

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PAID & VOLUNTEER STAFF OF RAILTOWN 1897 STATE HISTORIC PARK

Upcoming Events

July 2, 3 & 4

4th of July trains
(No. 3 all three days)

Entertainment:

Saturday: Julio & Nedra

Sunday: Ryan Richelson

Monday: Jim Mueller

July 5

Railtown Ladies Luncheon
Great Wall of China at the
Junction, call Dottie @
533-8483

July 8

Trains begin every Wednesday
in July and
August, *Also Story Time in
the Little Red Caboose

July 8, 9, 10

Railtown will have a booth
staffed by volunteers in the
Manzanita Building at the
Motherlode Fair

July 9

8am in the Carriage Room
Sam Mello is giving a session
on The role of the California
State Railroad Museum and
Railtown. She'll also be
discussing the Polar Express
Event and fielding any
questions you may have
**ALL VOLUNTEERS ARE
INVITED**

July 13

Capital District Staff Only
'All Hands Meeting'

July 16

8am in the Carriage Room
Our Curator Lisa DeLacy is
giving a session on
Volunteers, Stewardship and
Cultural Resources:

July 20

Capital District Staff Only
'All Hands Meeting'

July 30

Rods to Rails Event

Velocipede Hand-Cars

The subject of the velocipede hand car came up from volunteers the other day. Here is a reprint from the July 2011 Turntable.

Many varieties of hand-powered railcars exist, and it cannot be determined who first invented this style of equipment. The railroad velocipede on display at Railtown was invented by George S. Sheffield, of Three Rivers, Michigan and patented in 1879. Sheffield, who was a cabinetmaker, lived on the rail line 7 miles from town; invented it to use as a scooter to get to town. The velocipede is made of wood and iron and weights about 140 lbs., which is light enough for one man to turn alone. Powered by both hand and foot levers, they were used in the USA and Europe for railroad signal inspection and maintenance. Additionally, other uses included mail delivery in some areas and telegraph delivery. It was particularly helpful for inspecting track as it was faster than walking, but allowed the inspector a good view of the track.

A description of how track inspectors used velocipedes is included in the 1897 book *The American Railway*:

*One of the habitués of every station is the **section-master**, who looks after three, five, or ten miles of track and a gang of from five to twenty-five men who keep it in repair. He is not much seen, because he is out on the road most of the time; and his duties are not of a kind that the reader could study, on paper, to much advantage; but he deserves mention because his place is a really important one. Railroad tracks . . . must be constantly watched to see that they do not fall even a little below their highest standard. This care-taking can be entrusted only to one who has had long experience at the work. In violent rain-storms the trackman must be on duty night and day and **patrol the whole length of his division** to see that gravel is not washed over the track or out from under it. Though roughly dressed and sun burnt, he is an important personage in the eye of the engineer of a fast express train.*



GEO. S. SHEFFIELD & CO.,
THREE RIVERS, MICH.
MANUFACTURERS OF
Velocipede Hand-Cars.

The lightest and easiest-running hand-car made. Every car warranted to give satisfaction, or no sale. Send for particulars and prices.



Blowing Off Steam

by David Tadlock

By Definition: *To do or say something that helps you to get rid of strong feelings or energy.* Sometimes we all need to “*Blow off a little steam*”. But when the Engine Crew say they’re going to “*blow down some steam*” it means something a little bit different. To ensure against the buildup of scale and rust Railtown treats its boiler water with a “daily mix” of chemicals. While this helps with the buildup, a morning blow down is still required. What does a blow down do? It forces out any loose scale and rust that might have built up in the boiler since the last boiler wash. Not treating scale and/or rust can affect steaming characteristics, not to mention cause damage to the boiler. (Boiler washes are done after every 31 service days). Each morning as the Engine Crew prepares to bring the locomotive out front they will usually stop on the roundhouse lead next to the pond, making sure there aren’t any cars or people in the area. Once given the ok, the fireman will open the blow down valve located on the fireman’s side just slightly to stir up any sediment on the bottom of the mud ring. He’ll then open the valve fully for about 5 seconds, close it, wait 10 or so seconds and the repeat the process until he’s satisfied any scale or rust that might have broken loose has been removed. Invite the park visitors to come out near the pond around 9:00 each morning that steam is being run to experience this exciting, yet necessary part of steam railroading at Railtown.





**Featured Photo's
By
Railtown's Volunteer**

**Photographer
Zachary Levey**





This month we want to say hello to **Eric Dowty**, Railroad Restoration Specialist. Eric was hired by the California State Railroad Museum Foundation earlier this year to work alongside George Sapp and has been much needed addition to our restoration team. Born in Pasadena, he grew up with steam railroading. His father Robert Dowty was a well-known fireman and brakeman, on the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. The family spent the summers in McNary, Arizona where his father worked on the White Mountain Scenic Railroad. It was there Eric started as a volunteer and eventually became a brakeman and fireman himself. A lifelong railroader, Eric has worked many places. He worked for Knott's Berry Farm for almost 3 years. There he met our very own George Sapp. In fact it was there he helped train George as a fireman.

Other rail projects took him to the Durango & Silverton in Colorado and the Grand Canyon Railway in Williams, Arizona. But the biggest and most rewarding project of all was for the Golden Spike Railway at Promontory, Utah where he and his father Robert worked for 11 years. Eric worked alongside his father as machinist/ mechanic building the replica engines for the National Park Service. They built from scratch the "Jupiter" #60 (Central Pacific) and the #119 (Union Pacific), the famous engines in the historic golden spike ceremony held in 1869. Eric said the hardest and most difficult part of recreating the engines was sticking to the contract and keeping everything in the exact original dimensions of the locomotives. Eric is glad to be here at Railtown. "I've always wanted to be involved with the Sierra Railway. When I was a kid I used to visit here with my dad. Next to the Golden Spike at Promontory, being at Railtown is the nicest place I've ever been!"





PO Box 1250
Jamestown, CA 95327
Return Service Requested

TO:



Depot Store- (209) 984-3953
Railtown Website: www.railtown1897.org
Volunteer Website- <http://railtown.team.parks.ca.gov/volunteers>
Railtown Blog- www.railtown1897.wordpress.com
Newsletter Editor— Dave.Rainwater@parks.ca.gov
Crew Caboose- (209) 984-0352



Railtown 1897 & The California State Railroad Museum Foundation thanks our following business members:

The Union Democrat, Black Oak Casino Resort, The Willow Steakhouse and Saloon, The National Hotel, The Jamestown Hotel, The Twain Harte Rotary, The Tuolumne County Economic Prosperity Council, Tourism Tactics, Pizza Plus, Buck's Auto Body, Yosemite Title, Sierra Nevada Communications, Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau, Edward Jones, Hurst Ranch, Robert E. Boyer Construction Inc., Kiwanis of Sonora



Railtown Paid and Volunteer Staff Contact Information

(all area codes are 209, except where noted)

Stephen VanEtten , Park Superintendent	984-4622	Stephen.vanetten@parks.ca.gov
George Sapp , Railroad Restoration Lead Worker (DSLE)	774-6368	George.Sapp@parks.ca.gov
Lisa DeLacy , Museum Curator I (DER)	984-3119	Lisa.DeLacy@parks.ca.gov
Karen Kling , Park Interpretive Specialist	984-8703	Karen.Kling@parks.ca.gov
Jeri Zemon , Park Interpretive Specialist	984-8703	jeri.zemon@parks.ca.gov
Rob Buchanan , Park Maintenance Worker I	984-8702	Rob.Buchanan@parks.ca.gov
Danny Taylor , Park Maintenance Assistant	984-8702	Danny.Taylor@parks.ca.gov
Dave Rainwater , Senior Park Aide & Volunteer Coordinator	984-4408	Dave.Rainwater@parks.ca.gov
Lew Barnard , Fire Patrol Coordinator	916-343-2667	wa6esa@sbcglobal.net
Karen Ethier , Ticket Agent Coordinator	471-7525	kmethier@gmail.com
Ron White , Stationmaster Coordinator	551-7087	rbarryw@att.net

Newsletter Available in Alternative Format on Request